

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9693

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S E C R E T SAIGON 20541

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: MILI VS

SUBJECT: FURTHER DETAILS ON MILITARY ACTION IN QUANG DUC,

DEC 4, 1973

FOL TEL FM NHA TRANG 1001 DEC 6 73 ACTION SAIGON INFO USDAO SAIGON
REPT'D FOR UR INFO QTE

S E C R E T NHA TRANG 1001

DAO FOR AOSOP-OR/IS/IX

REF: NHA TRANG 0091

1. FOLLOWING IS INITIAL MR 2 REPORT OF CASUALTIES IN ACTION IN
QUANG DUC DECEMBER 4.

(A) FRIENDLY-39 KIA, 28 WIA, 124 MIA, TWO MORTARS, TWO 4
BARREL LMG, 36 SA AND ONE JEEP DESTROYED.

(B) ENEMY-229 KIA, TEN TANKS DESTROYED, 3 AK SEIZED.

(C) FVN 4271 REPORTS A PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE OF ABOUT 100
CIVILIAN CASUALTIES WHEN KIEN DUC WAS OVERRUN.

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2. BASED ON INTERVIEWS WITH MGEN TOAN, 23 DIV COMMANDER, HIS G-2 AND THE KIEN DUC DISTRICT CHIEF, DARLO HAS RECONSTRUCTED FOLLOWING PICTURE OF THE ACTION ON DECEMBER 4, PARTICULARLY AT KIEN DUC.

(A) ON DECEMBER 3 REPORTS FILTERED IN OF INCREASED ENEMY ACTIVITY SOUTHWEST OF KIEN DUC AND NHON CO AIRFIELD.

EARLY ON THE MORNING OF THE 4TH SAPPER ELEMENTS INFILTRATED KIEN DUC DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS, BUT BY 1600 THAT AFTERNOON THE DISTRICT CHIEF REPORTED THEY HAD BEEN CLEARED FROM THE AREA.

(B) THE DISTRICT CHIEF SAID HE RECEIVED REPORTS A TANK COLUMN WAS MOVING IN FROM THE SOUTHEAST. HE CALLED FOR AIR SUPPORT, BUT BAD WEATHER PREVENTED IT. TANKS WERE ALSO SIGHTED SOUTHWEST ALONG QL 14 TOWARD THE PHOUCLONG BORDER.

(C) THE ASSAULT ON KIEN DUC BEGAN AT ABOUT 1915. SAPPERS USING AT-3 MISSILES DESTROYED THE AMMUNITION AND COMMUNICATIONS OF THE RECCE AND HEADQUARTERS COMPANIES OF THE 53RD REGT. THE MAIN ATTACK BY 20 TANKS AND AN UNKNOWN-SIZED ENEMY FORCE CAUSED THE DEFENDERS (2 COMPANIES) TO RETREAT. THE ACTION WAS OVER BY 1945. (THE REGIMENTAL COMMAND DISTRICT COMMAND POSTS WERE SUBSEQUENTLY REESTABLISHED NEAR NHAN CO AIRFIELD, WHICH IS AGAIN IN USE.)

(D) ELSEWHERE DURING THE DAY CONTACT WAS LOST WITH THE 2/42, 2/53, AND 3/53 SOUTH OF BU PRONG. ELEMENTS OF THE 21 RANGERS AT DAK SONG ENGAGED AN ENEMY UNIT INCLUDING TANKS AND THE 44TH REGIMENT, ENGAGED IN CLEARING HIGH GROUNDS NORTH OF DAK SONG, REPORTED SPORADIC CONTACTS.

3. ENEMY AND FRIENDLY INTENTIONS.

GENERAL TOAN FEELS THAT THE ENEMY INTENDS TO TAKE GIA NGHIA AND RETAKE DAK SONG. HIS PRIORITIES ARE (A) TO DEFEND GIA NGHIA, AND (B) TO CLEAR THE HIGH GROUND AROUND DAK SONG IN ORDER TO OPEN THE ROUTE FROM DUC LAP TO GIA NGHIA.

4. CIVILIAN CASUALTIES

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BEFORE THE ATTACK THERE WERE 2,000 FARMER BU BONG REFUGEES AND ABOUT 2,500 KIEN DUC RESIDENTS IN THE TOWN. THE DISTRICT CHIEF BELIEVES MOST OF THE 1,500 VIETNAMESE RESIDENTS STAYED PUT, WHILE THE MONTAGNARDS FLED THROUGH THE COUNTRYSIDE.

SPEAR

UNQTE MARTIN

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